



Wisconsin Department of
Health and Family Services

Preventing the Spread of Influenza in a Day Care Setting

How You Can Help

Influenza (the “flu”) is a viral illness that is spread from person to person when people cough or sneeze near each other. The best way to prevent serious illness from the flu is to get immunized. Health officials encourage all persons over the age of 6 months to receive the “flu shot”. Immunization is strongly recommended for those at higher risk of complications from the flu. It is important to follow the guidelines listed below to help protect you and others from getting the flu. For more information, visit the website

of the Department of Health and Family Services at: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/influenza>.

Immunization (Flu Shot)

All children, day care staff, and volunteers in the following categories should be immunized:

- 1. children 6-23 months of age.**
- 2. children with chronic medical conditions.***
- 3. children aged 6 months--18 years receiving long-term aspirin therapy and might be at risk for Reye syndrome after influenza infection.**
- 4. day care providers who are pregnant during influenza season.**
- 5. day care providers of children less than 6 months old.**

* People with chronic medical conditions include those who have chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems, including asthma (hypertension is not considered a high-risk condition), persons who have required regular medical follow-up or hospitalization during the preceding year because of chronic metabolic diseases (including diabetes mellitus), renal dysfunction, hemoglobinopathies, or immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by human immunodeficiency virus [HIV]), and persons with any condition (e.g., cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other neuromuscular disorders) that can compromise respiratory function, the handling of respiratory secretions, or increase the risk for aspiration.

Coughing and Sneezing

Children and their care providers should practice good health habits when coughing or sneezing by:

1. Covering their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
2. Discarding the tissue in a waste container immediately after use.
3. Washing hands (as outlined below) immediately after disposing of tissue.

When necessary, care providers should assist children, then immediately wash their own hands. Care providers should not allow children or anyone else to share drinking cups or eating utensils.

Hand Hygiene

Where there are sinks, plenty of soap and paper towels should be available.

To help protect against respiratory illnesses, care providers should wash their hands and instruct children to do so:

1. After coughing and sneezing.
2. Between contacts with infants and children, as much as possible.
3. Before and after eating.
4. After hands touch another person who has a cough or cold.
5. Whenever hands are not clean.

Hands should be washed with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds, with rubbing action, then rinsed, and dried with a paper towel. A clean paper towel should be used to turn off water faucets.

Staying Home When Sick

Children should be observed for symptoms of respiratory illness. Children, staff, and volunteers who develop symptoms of influenza (fever, chills, sore throat, cough, headache, muscle aches) should be sent home.

Children, staff, and volunteers with influenza should stay home for at least 5 to 7 days after onset of symptoms.